



Windham Raymond Adult Education

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Testimony to support LD 1705 - An Act Regarding Adult Education Funding and Oversight

April 30, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

My name is Thomas Nash, and I have been the Director of Windham Raymond Adult Education (WRAE) in the RSU #14 School District for over 21 years. I have also proudly served as an adult education administrator in three other districts, totaling almost 40 years of helping to improve the lives of adult learners through education.

I am here today to express my strong support for LD 1705, "An Act Regarding Adult Education Funding and Oversight", submitted by Representative Holly Sargent, which addresses several critical needs within Maine's adult education system. The passage of this bill would represent a significant step forward in strengthening educational opportunities for Maine residents.

Firstly, LD 1705 codifies the Career Advancement and Navigation Program, requesting funding for the College and Career Success Coordinators (CCSCs), which has proven to be highly successful. This program provides invaluable personalized support to students, including academic guidance, transition assistance for those entering community college, and referrals to essential resources. By ensuring the continuation of this program, we are investing in the success of our students, their families, and, ultimately, in the success of our workforce. At Southern Maine Community College, where our regional CCSC is based, over the past six months alone, 158 contacts have occurred, resulting in 41 academic and career plans created for students, 125 referrals to outside partner agencies, 37 new community college enrollees, and 53 interagency contacts.

Secondly, this bill takes necessary steps towards improving the funding and oversight of adult education programs across the state. It mandates annual assessments of adult education needs, requires detailed reporting on funding and outcomes, and establishes clear guidelines for the use of state funds. These measures will promote transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the allocation of resources, ultimately benefiting both programs and our adult students.

Finally, LD 1705 acknowledges the chronic underfunding of adult education and takes steps to address it. By requiring the Legislature to appropriate 100% of the state's obligation for adult education funding, this bill underscores the importance of these programs. It ensures they receive the necessary financial support to fulfill their vital mission. For example, over the past five years, WRAE received local tax contributions of \$1,575,682 and state adult education subsidies of \$801,716. A 100% state obligation would have resulted in an additional \$782,807 for our program. That would have allowed us to employ and retain full-time teaching staff and expand our services at a time when the state needed well-educated, well-trained adults to enter our workforce or reskill.

In conclusion, on behalf of the adult learners in my program, in my region, and throughout the state, I urge you to support LD 1705 and provide the necessary funding and assistance that our learners and programs deserve. This bill will strengthen adult education in Maine, empower our residents, and contribute to the economic and social well-being of our state.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to adult education.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Nash, Director, Windham Raymond Adult Education



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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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AUGUSTA, ME 04333-0023

JANET T. MILLS
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GOVERNOR
COMMISSIONER

A. PENDER

January 29, 2025

Christopher Howell
RSU #14 School Department
228 Windham Center Road
Windham, ME 04062

Superintendent Christopher Howell,

This letter is to inform you of your adult education subsidy estimate for FY26. The Maine Department of Education, Office of Adult Education will award adult education subsidy to your adult education program in the fall of 2025. The adult education subsidy calculation is based on your district's FY24 local contribution to adult education and the eligible adult education costs expended during the 2023-2024 academic year. For FY26 budgeting purposes, the estimated subsidy amount is below.

Subsidy estimate for FY26: RSU #14 Adult Education \$ 187,320.67

Please note that this amount is an estimate only and is not final until the state budget is passed. If you have any questions about this letter, please contact me at 557-2683.

We sincerely, appreciate the efforts of your adult education program and look forward to another successful year.

Sincerely,

Megan Dichter
She/her/hers
State Adult Education Director
Workforce Development & Innovative Pathways
Cell-207-557-2683



cc: Thomas Nash